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Not to be Refused.

COMPREHENSION

Humbly Desired.

THE

CHURCHES PEACE

Earnestly Endeavoured.

PHILALETHES EIRENES.

Let my Sentence come forth from thy Presence; let thine Eyes behold the things that are equal, Ps. 17. 3.

LONDON.

Printed in the Year 1673.

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SInce His Majesties Happy Restauration (wherein the Welfare and Unity of the Church of *England* was and is still much concerned) it hath been thought reason of State, and so Resolved upon, that such Ministers as would not subscribe the Declaration, and declare as in the Act of Uniformity in 1662. is required; should not be capable of holding any Ecclesiastical Benefice, nor permitted to preach. Many Ministers thereupon have since that time laid aside the Exercise of their Ministry, as not being clear in some disputable Points therein contained and prescribed; yet very well resolved, and in Conscience satisfied in all things necessary to the true Protestant Religion, and their Allegiance and Obedience to His Majesty, their most Rightful and Dread Soveraign, and to the Being, Peace and Order of the Church of *England*, in whose Communion they intend to live and die.

And it doth very much refresh them, in this ten years last silence and obscurity of theirs, that they neither harbour any principles of Disloyalty or Schisme; much less favoured any practice of Disunion or Disobedience; but intend to be found in the way of their Duty to God and the King all their dayes.

And it doth not a little add to their contentment and comfort in their Afflictions, That His Sacred Majesty hath not only Declared them Loyal and Peaceable, but also endeavoured in His Speeches and Actions, a Legal and Fitting Indulgence for them; and now done something preparatory thereunto in His late Declaration.

For indeed the Act of Uniformity (although by the Subscriptions and Appointments thereof, it hath taken in many Grave, Learned and Worthy Persons) yet others also are such taken in by it, who are not so well conditioned in their Minds, Morals and Affections to the true Interest of the Church of *England*, as others that are now laid aside: nor have they ever declared so much for Her in Her Straights and Obscurity, as they have done, who are not therein comprehended. So that it hath not been an adæquate and sufficient Test, and Standard of all mens integrity and peaceableness, nor wrought any great cure upon our Divisions, so as was expected; but we are broken still, to the great gratification of those that would invade or undermine the Church it self, by their extream Opinions and Animosities.

And it may be, upon these, or such like Considerations, some worthy Patriots in Parliament, and some reverend Fathers have not been unwilling to allow the Non-conformists such relaxations, and that by Law, as may be consistent with the Essentials of the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of *England*; thanks to them for their respects and good remembrance of us.

But I must confess there have not been wanting also some Ecclesiastical Incendiaries and Boutefews, who have endeavoured by their preaching and writing, and otherwise, to keep the Flame aloft, and the Wounds still fresh and bleeding; to the ruine of many poor Ministers and their Families for ever: and not without some inconvenience also to the Church and People of God; to whose misguided zeal, and hectical heat, I shall offer nothing for the guiding of their actions and passions, but the Church's present condition; and refer them to their own Natural and Evangelical Affections; if there be any bowels of Love, Ingenuity or Charity to the Church and their Brethren, who think themselves as good Subjects, and as true Ministers and Members of Christ, and as peaceable in their principles and practices as themselves.

And as for His Majesties Gracious Declaration, *March* 1671. which many men according to their fears and hopes,

their interests and tempers, their ill or good natures, make various constructions of (for Princes actions pass no more without animadversions than other mens) what others say or think, it seems to be a genuine, and natural effect of that antipathy and enmity, which is in His Majesties Disposition and Nature to all violent proceedings against those that have truly tender Consciences: And if it reach further to others, whose principles are not modest, nor honest; but grate upon the foundation, and tend not to peace nor solid piety, it is but a pleonasme or overflow of that great kindness which He alwayes intended and expressed about matters of Religion; wherein He had rather overdo in things so agreeable to His own good temper, than seem to leave any out of the compass and umbrage of His Favour and Indulgence; the fault being theirs, that know not how to govern themselves; not His, that knows wisely to attemper severity and sweetness, and fitly to join them together in the Government of His People.

Since which Declaration, there hath lately come forth a busie Paper, the Title whereof is, *Toleration not to be abused*; Or, *A Serious Question debated and resolved, Whether it be advisable, especially for the* Presbyterians, *either in Conscience, or Prudence, to take advantage from His Majesties late Declaration to deny or rebate their Communion with our Parochial Congregations, and to gather themselves into distinct and separate Churches?*

Which Question I suppose the *Presbyterians* will resolve in the Negative, as well as the Proposer; and I must also acquaint him that there hath been scarcely any thing that looks like an Argument in his whole Debate, but hath been considered and ventilated with all respect and tenderness to the Church of *England*.

Nor indeed can it be in reason and duty imagined, That His Sacred Majesty intending by this Declaration, an Indulgence to tender Consciences, should intend to leave out the greatest part of His Loyal and Obedient Subjects, who are Dissenters;

Diſſenters; much leſs intangle them in any way of Separation or Schiſme contrary to their Conſciences and the Churches peace; which the Debater ſeems to intimate.

So that if this Book be intended in kindneſs to direct the *Presbyterians* in their way at preſent in things they could not elſe poſſibly have foreſeen without the Debaters help, or as a Mediator to move them to hold off a while till the Biſhops make their way more clear by ſome Epiſcopal Licenſe for publick places, in ſubſervience to the Kings Declaration; or till ſome Comprehenſion can be legally procured by Act of Parliament to make them ſtand *recti in foro Regni, Eccleſiæ & Conſcientiæ*, as well as other men.

Or if his end be really to advance the true Church of *England*, and not to weaken it; to declare the ſobriety of the *Presbyterian* principles and practices, and not to blazon their infirmities, which they acknowledge to be many as well as other mens; they have reaſon to thank him for his good intentions.

But not for ſtating the Queſtion for them; for it is in effect, to enquire whether the *Presbyterians* may go according to their principles or not? whether they may turn *Independents* or not? whether they may leave their relation to and communion with the Church of *England* or not? which indeed is ridiculous and contradictious. For the truth is, they ſeem (ſuch as I am acquainted with) to be ſo far from deſiring to know whether they may go againſt their principles or not, that they would not, though they might have a particular diſpenſation for it; but deſire to comport themſelves as they have hitherto done towards their Mother the Church of *England*, with all duty and good manners; and to have their actions at the offers of their duty paſs without offence or miſ-repreſentation.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THerefore the Question in my opinion, ought to be this;

Whether the Presbyterians *considering their great endeavours, and desires to enjoy a Legal Indulgence and Comprehension by the Law of the Land, as to some Scholastick and disputable points betwixt them and their Superiors, Fathers and Brethren, which are not essential to the government of Church and State; the government whereof many of them upon their Oaths, have obliged themselves not to alter; and not being yet able to procure it, and having given sufficient testimony of their Sobriety and Peaceableness these ten years last past, may not at this time accept of His Majesties Indulgence in His Declaration without offence or self-contradiction?*

For the clearing whereof it is necessary to premise these things,

1. That the interest of the Church of *England*, both as to the being and well-being of it, ought to be promoted and encouraged by all the Members and Ministers thereof; and all safe means and wayes as speedily and as effectually undertaken as may be, for the advancement thereof; considering her danger from Papists and Phanaticks, which offer to swallow up all, the one by an Infallible Supremacy, the other by an Infallible Spirit; and both vain and counterfeit.

2. Those persons which you call *Presbyterians*, which have been secluded from their Ministry these ten years past by the Act of Uniformity, are not conscious to themselves of any inward principle of Opinion, or Dissatisfaction contrary to the Church

Church of *England*; and that many of them in all Counties have ſo behaved themſelves, by attending upon the worſhip of God, as it is now eſtabliſh'd, in publick, that the Miniſters of their ſeveral pariſhes may and will teſtifie with them of the decency and inoffenſiveneſs of their carriage and attendance hitherto: though it may be, ſome others, where there have been no Churches, or Miniſters ſcandalous and unprofitable, may have adventured ſometimes to have preached in private for the Service of ſuch a deſtitute people, and for ſome maintenance too, happily for themſelves and Families, which otherwiſe might have ſtarved; the manner of their Education unfitting them for manual Labour: and all this without any affront to the Laws, or enervation of the ſtrength and Doctrine of the Churches to which they ſeverally belong: therefore are not altogether unfit to be comprehended in any Act, Statute, Licenſe, or Indulgence, which may further the ſettlement and tranquility of the Church.

3. And if ſo, it is not unſafe but profitable at all times to ſtrengthen its intereſt, and multiply and encourage ſuch Miniſters and Members as are ready in their Conſciences, and by their ſtudy, diligence, and peaceableneſs, to do as much good as they can; ſince Turks, Papiſts, and they of the ſeparation, are all for the encreaſe of their number; and the Church in the primitive times looked upon it as its Glory, that there were added to it daily ſuch as ſhould be ſaved; and Jews, Gentiles, and diſcontented perſons were then converted, and after their Converſion, Ordination and Uſefulneſs in the Church, were encouraged; notwithſtanding ſome minute differences in Diſpoſition and Opinion. And methinks the Church of *England* ſhould not at any time look upon it, for her honour and peace, to narrow her own Intereſt, and perplex her Followers with unneceſſary Subſcriptions, Impoſitions, or Altercations; eſpecially conſidering theſe *Presbyterians* are ſtill ſo ready to ſtick by her, living and dying, notwithſtanding all their diſcouragements and diſappointments; when as others fall in with her more for her Dividends, than her Doctrine: and if a man may ſee any thing in its cauſes, will make it appear ſo, if ever ſhe ſhould be in danger.

4. Small

4. Small and little considerations ought not for ever to keep the breach and wound open; considering how these smaller matters were dispensed with, not only in the Apostles times, and by persons and superiours who were divinely inspired; but also in after-Ages, when differences arose about these little things, and were very hot and high at the beginning; yet were very fairly and prudently taken up when both sides had spent their heats; as particularly in the business of *Easter*: which *Irenæus*, though of *Victor*'s mind, did endeavour to compose, by a fair and fraternal Indulgence; *& non molliter* Victorem *ipsum reprehendebat*, as *Eusebius* tells us, for being so fierce and imperious in a Custom of that nature.

And it is likely the *Papists* would allow many things which they peremptorily enough insisted upon in the beginning of the Reformation; as Priests Marriages, and the Sacrament in both kinds, could they have the Church of *England* theirs, as it was before.

And why our men should not do the like to their Brethren, of whose peaceableness and soundness in the Faith, they have had so good experience, for the Churches increase and glory: especially in *minutioribus hisce*, I understand not why they should not be as tender of all her Members and Ministers, and endeavour with as much prudence and indulgence, to keep them together in a true Church, as her ancient predecessors did, and her Enemies and Underminers still do.

Yea considering withall that with some persons they do it daily, and such things are connived at, and indulged even amongst Conformists themselves: one way they have in Cathedrals, another in Parochial Churches: some pray towards the East, others do not so; some bow, others bow not: why then should there not upon the same ground, be the same dispensations in other reputed Indifferences? That which hath been done may be done again *in eadem materia*.

Considering withal, that the substantial peace and unity which this brings along with it, and is now obstructed, is really better than the external decency and order which the strict imposing of these unnecessaries may promote.

And besides, it is also said that even some of the very Doctrinal Articles of the Church of *England* themselves are so cautiously and temperately warded (for peace sake) that even they that have different sentiments and apprehensions thereof, may and do subscribe them: And if this Liberty may be given in Doctrine, wherein the Subscribers dispute *pro* and *con*; why may it not also in Ceremonies and Mods of Worship, especially if the peace of the Church so require it; I shall leave to my Betters to consider and determine.

5. Though great expectations have been, that more might have come in in all this time; that the Church of *England* might have been more glorious in her Numbers, Discipline, Uniformity and Ceremonies, yet because all men have not the command of their own understandings, it hath not fallen out accordingly: And the King's Sacred Majesty well declares it, That He hath *found little fruit of these ways of Coertion for these twelve years past.* So that it hath not only pleased some Worthy Persons to move for a Comprehension in several Sessions of Parliament, in order to the cure of our Divisions; which have hitherto been obstructed, or laid aside: But it hath pleased the Kings Majesty to give out His own Gracious Declaration for Indulgence; which, whether it ought now to be accepted by the *Presbyterians*, as the Case, or as their Principles lie, is the Question.

It cannot be denied but that all the *Presbyterians* wishes, and desires are to enjoy their Liberties in publick places, and to be restored to the exercise of their Ministry again by the same Full and Legal Authority which thought fit to lay them aside; that they may not seem to abet or espouse any unwarrantable Separation, or be entangled in any real or reputed Schisme, or offensive distance or distinction, either in place or practice, from the Church of *England*; to whom be all peace and prosperity.

Nor would they seem to neglect the discharge of their duty when called to it, nor slight His Majesties Kindness, so freely and graciously offered; especially when He, in deep reason of State thinks it may be an Expedient to procure

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that Unity and Reconciliation which all other forcible course could not hitherto effect. Some think this the way for unity, others that it tends to Schism and Faction: Whose Judgments should be followed? If we proceed, we offend our Fathers and Brethren; if we refuse, we give occasion to our Soveraign to think us a company of sowr and ungovernable men, whom neither kindness nor severity will soften: when as God Almighty, who knows our hearts, sees and knows otherwise; and that we are ready, as far as we can, to obey; and where we cannot, to suffer in all humble silence and submission.

Now the Question, as I said before, is, *Whether the* Presbyterians *may not according to their Principles accept of His Majesties Indulgence without offence or self-contradiction?*

CHAP. III.

THe Affirmative I prove thus;

1. From the Nature of this Acceptance, which is a thankful Acceptance of His Majesties Grace and Favour; and an inward willingness signified in this outward acceptance of His Majesties Kindness, to be at the employment which they are appointed and ordained to: Now inward thankfulness and sense of duty, and outward preaching of the Gospel, with an earnest endeavour to promote Gods Glory, the Kings Honour, the Kingdomes Happiness, the Churches Peace, and to discharge their own duty in the several capacities and relations which the Providence of God, and the Prudence of a Christian and Protestant Prince shall cast us into, is not simply evil, which seems to be their Case, and to have no intrinsecal or formal evil in it.

For Consequences which may fall out, or Offences which

may be taken accidentally, or invidious reflections, while a man is doing his duty, these are things incident and adherent to the most warrantable and just actions: and are not to be taken any cognizance of where the agent is right in his intentions, and the action in its substantial ingredients, as it is abstracted from the Agent's infirmities and indiscretions, and the by-standers active and passive miss-representations and ill constructions.

2. Such an Acceptance of a Favour from their Prince is not contrary to the principles and practices of *Presbyterians* quatenas *Presbyterians*; for the Notion and Principle that denominateth them such, is, that a Bishop is not an higher Order or Degree of Ministry in the Church than the Priesthood: in other things they agree with the established Doctrine and Faith of the Church of *England*, and are willing to submit to the Discipline thereof as it is by Law established.

And how such a point should make all this great difference, or be inconsistent with the acceptance of a kindness offered them by His Majesty, is a thing not to be conceived: it may be as well said, if the King should offer them a Living, with their liberty, or publick places to preach in, or a maintenance for themselves and their Families, it is against their principles to take it. But for my part, I neither take them to be such a company of fools as to do so; nor do I believe doth the Debater think so; nor do I believe would he himself do so, if he had their Sentiments, or were in their Circumstances.

Nor is it against the *Presbyterians* practices, for they all along, together with their Episcopal Brethren, accepted of the Liberty then offered and indulged to them in the late times of Usurpation: and why they should not do it now, in the Reign, and from the Hands of their most Rightful Sovereign, I see not.

The Primitive Christians fell to their work, and bless'd God when they had any respite from the Tyranny and Oppression of Heathenish and cruel Princes: And why they should either with scorn or sullenness reject any kindness from

from a Christian, Protestant and Gracious Prince, is not to be apprehended.

Withal considering that there are as severe & resolved *Presbyterians* in *France*, and other places, as we have here in *England*; and no body upbraids them, that I can hear of, for going against their Principles and Consciences, in accepting and improving the Liberty therein granted, to the Honour of God and the peace of the Church.

Obj. But in *France* they have another Religion uppermost: and they are bound to preach the Gospel, as it lies in their way in opposition to it: Here, there is the same Religion which the *Presbyterians* profess; and the same Church which they are Members and Ministers of, and they ought not to set up Altar against Altar.

Answ. This is no setting up Altar against Altar, nor any undermining of the Doctrine or Church of *England* on the *Presbyterians* part; but a subservient Duty, tending to the Unity and Peace thereof, in such a capacity as His Majesty hath thought fit to place them. Some are appointed to rule as Bishops; others to assist in Rule and Government as Deans and Chapters; others to preach the Gospel in publick Churches and Chappels: And if His Majesty give way to such as you call *Presbyters*, to pursue the same ends in publick Halls, or private Houses, who can think much, since the work goes on in the lowest as well as the highest Officers and places?

Obj. But the *Presbyterians* in former times preached and wrote against Toleration and Indulgence; and if they do now fall in with it, they contradict themselves.

Answ. Some did and some did not; but however in those dayes when Errors and Heresies first appeared, there was greater need and reason of a severe declaring against them, and a toleration of them than afterwards, when they had so generally spread themselves all the Kingdom over; that if it had been possible, they might have been prevented and crushed.

crushed in the beginning: but since they have grown now so far, other means must be used, and not the same Methods followed with springing and overgrown Diseases.

Besides many of those that declared against such a Toleration, if not all of them, are dead and gone; and there are others now who are *posterai* to those times, who now suffer, who were not capable of saying or doing any thing about publick mattters.

To all which I adde, that our Episcopal Brethren, if it should ever be possible, that they should live under the same discouragement and disadvantage, now from His Majesty, or any of His Successors, or the Law; which the *Presbyterians* now do lie under, and had a grant of their Liberty offered them in common with others, if they would please to let us know what they would then do, notwithstanding all their Declarations and Reasons against Toleration, Indulgence and Comprehension at this time: it is verily thought that the *Presbyterians* are herein so fully of their mind and principles therein, that they would do accordingly.

CHAP IV.

THe third Reason arises from the Nature of their Ordination, and the necessity that lies upon such as are Ordained to preach the Gospel, together with the solemn promise, made by every Minister, to preach according to his Duty, notwithstanding all difficulties whatsoever.

Which Argument, to my knowledge, hath so far prevailed with many pious and peaceable men, that they have thought it their duty to preach as they had opportunity, notwithstanding all the Severities that have been enacted and exercised to the contrary.

Though it may be others out of the great reverence and re-

reſpect they had to Laws and publick Authority, and the great affection they bore to the Church it ſelf, and her peace and unity, thought it more meet and reaſonable, for Orders ſake, to ſubmit to their Cenſure, and to ſuſpend the exerciſe of their Miniſtry, till it ſhould pleaſe God to prepare their way to their work, without miſpriſions or offences; judging withal that the Wo before mentioned belongs to them that either through ſlothfulneſs neglect and ſlight their Duty, when they have opportunity to preach or ſtudy; or through treachery and cowardize run away from it, for fear of Jews, Heathens or Hereticks, and doth not concern the Cenſures that are made in a Chriſtian Church and State upon any of her Officers, which, for order and peace ſake, ought to be ſubmitted to, though they ſhould be inflicted and denounced *cum errante clave*: and this made many Miniſters, eſpecially, if not only, of the *Presbyterians*, to hold off in ſilence all this time; which is ſome evidence of the Affection and Reverence which they bear to the Church of *England*.

But being now the cenſure and penalty is taken off, and the way to their Duty opened, and in a good meaſure cleared, and the Kings Majeſty, who is in all Cauſes Eccleſiaſtical and Civil, Supream Governour, not only ſuſpending the penal Statutes, but alſo willing to approve and allow perſons to preach the Goſpel, and places to preach in: Conſidering their Ordination and Separation to the Work of the Miniſtry, and the Obligation that lies upon them to their Duty, from Gods precept, promiſe and threatning, I ſhall leave to conſideration whether the *Presbyterians* that accept of ſuch Licences, go with or againſt their Conſciences.

4. Conſidering the Exigence and Neceſſity of the Church, her affairs and ſtraights require all the help and aſſiſtance that can be got or made, for refuting Errors, propagating of Truth, and edifying all good men in the Faith and Knowledge of the Goſpel: And if the Kings Majeſty at Sea or Land have occaſion for Commanders or Souldiers in a preſent neceſſity, he will not refuſe even ſuch as are disbanded; nor ought they to caſt off or deny their Duty, when called to it, for the Honour and Safety of their King and Countrey.

And

And therefore the *Presbyterians* make account, in such a case as this is, and in such naughty times and dayes as we live in, when all kind of Vice, Errors and Heresies do abound, that they ought not to neglect their Duty; but preach the Gospel, *licet non ſo omnino ſecundum formam Statuti*: In a time of publick calamity all men can lay on their hands, and employ their heads, and ought so to do to prevent a common danger; especially when they are encouraged to it, and indulged in it, by him that next to God Almighty, hath the highest authority here on earth.

And for any one in such a case to say, that men go against their principles if they proceed, I wish such private and ill-laid principles were considered of, if there be any such; and how far they are obliging that seem to be so repugnant to, and destructive of a common and publick good.

CHAP. V.

NOw though these and many more Arguments of this Nature are and may be brought for the *Presbyterians* preaching of the Gospel, though the Door be but half open: considering also many of their pressing necessities, and the straights which they and their Families are brought into by their long enforced silence.

Yet I must confess, that notwithstanding all this, great care and caution, wisdom and prudence ought to be used in the use and improvement of this Liberty which His Majesty hath been pleased graciously to grant; As that those that are of the same Church may not seem by any means to fall from it, by an unjustifiable separation, or bear their people in hand that they begin, and intend to proceed upon a new Church-State; or that they were Ministers that had received another Ordination *in posse* than the Ministers of the Church of *England* now have; and also for the prevention of mistakes, con-

conceits, misrepresentations, and new offences, if they that are Licensed, or frequent Licensed Meetings, would have a reverence for, and attend upon Gods publick Worship in Churches and Chappels, at the usual times, or as often as conveniently they may, it would be a full answer to many unprofitable and ill-natured Scriblings, a great evidence of the *Presbyterians* integrity, of the tenderness of their Consciences, and the constancy and consistency of their principles, and of the great care which they have and all good men ought to have of the Honour and tranquility both of Church and State.

Or if considering the bitter and sore divisions that are amongst Fathers and Sons, Brethren and Fellow-Labourers of the same Church and Ministry, which tend very much to the endammaging, if not the endangering thereof, if the Reverend Bishops and others would but please to use what interest themselves or friends have or can make in this next approaching Session of Parliament, that such Ministers as are loyal and sober, pious and peaceable, may come to their work again, by some Act of Comprehension, which hath been often moved, and as often openly obstructed and secretly undermined; that so there may be mutual condescentions on both sides in order to Charity and Unity; I doubt not yet but to see happy dayes; and the Congregations and Consciences of Gods people will reap the happy fruits thereof; mens exulcerated minds and spirits will in a short time be healed; the common adversaries and underminers of our Church and the glory of it will be fully disappointed; Governors and Governed in their several stations and places well contented and rejoyced; the Churches interests of Doctrine, Discipline, Unity and Peace well strengthened and secured; and the mouths of all true Protestants, both abroad and at home, filled with acclamations of joy and gladness, and praises also to God for such an happy reconciliation; with their constant prayers to Heaven (not forgetting the Instruments thereof) for its prolongation and continuance, till Christ the Head of his Church come to Judgment.

CHAP. VI.

Obj. NOw if any should object and answer, this would be a good way if matters could be thus brought about; but it is sooner said than done.

Answ. It will be so in Heaven; and why some offers should not be made towards making us more happy in the Blessing of Reconciliation and peace, as well as more holy in the Acts and Duties of Sanctification, I see not. Holiness will not be perfect till we come to heaven; and yet means are used to make persons better and more mortified to the world, by preaching, praying, good Examples, Education and Endeavours: and why may not the same means be used in relation to Christian Concord and Charity? And though we cannot be perfect in this world, yet we should be perfecting Holiness, Peace, Mortification and Reconciliation in the fear of God.

Secondly, Neither is such a thing impossible to be done here in this world *quoad naturam rei*; though I must confess while every party retain their prejudice, passions, unkind remembrances of wrongs, and thoughts of revenge, it is utterly impossible: it would therefore do well that every one in their places, Superiors and Inferiors, would study and endeavour after those things that make for peace, which is most certainly *jure divino*, whatsoever things be or be not.

Where there are commands given, and promises made upon the observance of such commands, there is no impossibility implied or included: It is a vain thing to oppose against any of the Ten Commandments, an impossibility in them to be observed: now peace and living in peace and charity one with another is commanded, Rom. 14. 19. *Let us therefore follow the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie*

edifie another. 2 Cor. 13. 11. *Finally, Brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.* Heb. 12. 14. *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

And that it is practicable we see it daily; men can possess their souls in peace, keep their Families and Corporations in peace; and other Churches live in peace, and why may not ours do so too? Considering the great contentment and comfort we shall all reap by it another day, it is no great wisdome for any of us that have much and great work to do, and but a little time to live, that have Sickness, Death, Judgment, Eternity, upon the matter all at hand, to ruffle and discompose our selves and others by our heats and unkindness, to make our own passage rough and stormy out of this world into another, and leave all in anger, heats, and disorder behind us, when we are gone: all which might have been happily prevented by our innocent and amicable condescentions one unto another.

Let us not by any means leave the Family of God, the Church of Christ, and the Houshold of Faith, in strife and contention, if we can any way help it, either by deed or will before we die.

Sat infelicibus armis pugnatum: Sat communibus adversariis occasionis & commoditatis ad nostrum exitium exhibitum: sat imo nimis affectibus indultum malis: It is high time to be wise and good natured one unto another, to forgive what God hath forgiven, to dispense with such things as are dispensable, for the attainment of such sure and staple blessings as are indispensably necessary and essential to the life and being of our Church and Religion.

This, and much more may be said, but that such an one as I am must not prescribe rules of Government and Jurisdiction to my Superiors and Betters.

Obj. But must the Laws of the Land vail to every schismatical, factious, and private mans opinion?

Answ. No, by no means! But I pray let us not in fury and

ſpleen nickname ſuch for being ſo, as are upright in their hearts and conſciences, and plain and open in their outward actions for Truth and peace; and do as perfectly abhor Schiſm and Faction, and any thing of that complexion, and more too than any of their violent and virulent accuſers; and dare ſay further, that they ſhould neither ſleep nor die peaceably, if they were not as good Subjects to the King, and it may be better; and as true in their principles and Conſciences to the Doctrine and Intereſts of the Church of *England*, as any or moſt of thoſe that make the loudeſt declamations againſt Schiſme and Faction, and the moſt uncharitable and unchriſtian reflections upon their poor Brethren.

But it may do well that the true notion of Schiſme and Faction were truly ſtated, and ſuch as were truly ſuch, were admoniſhed, corrected and reſtrained; and not the nocent and innocent, loyal and diſloyal, hand over-head puniſhed and branded together promiſcuouſly, and without any diſcrimination. Scarce any one would ſuffer ſuch work to be in their own Families (that upon the ſurmiſes and whiſpers of a company of pick-thanks and bad men, that are not content with the places they are in, but have a mind to riſe by ſlanders and murdering other mens reputations) and give way that ſuch children as are in reality reſpective and dutiful to their Fathers and Superiors, ſhould be ſuſpected, ſuſpended, ejected and diſinherited, becauſe they had neither parts, nor wit, nor ſtrength, nor faces alike.

And if it would pleaſe our Superiors to make trial, and if they find not thoſe who are accounted little leſs than guilty of Hereſie and Sedition, both loyal and peaceable, and alſo ſound in the Faith, according to the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, then let them bring the wheel over them again, and doom them to perpetual ſilence and obſcurity as perſons invincibly obſtinate, and incapable either of encouragement or entertainment.

And if the courteous Reader pleaſe, let us a little conſider what Learned men ſay of Schiſm.

Schiſmatici dicuntur (inquit Aquinas) *quia propria ſponte*

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& intentione ab unitate Ecclesiæ se separant. Aquin. 22. 2. qu. 39. Now how this can be said of them who take their censure and seclusion from the Ministry, with all meekness and mansuetude, and intend to live and die in communion with the Church of *England*, either as Ministers or Members, let the world judge.

As S. *Jerome* tells us, *ep. 62. Nos nec Ecclesiam scindimus, neque à Patrum Communione dividimur, sed ab ipsis (ut ita dicam in cunabilis) Catholico sumus lacte nutriti.*

Schisma est contra pacem, quæ est bonum participatum (saves the same *Aquinas*) Now how they can be guilty of Schism that pray for peace, petition for peace, and by all good means pursue and promote peace, and are willing to undergo any good test whatsoever which is essential to truth and peace, let all men see and say their minds.

Schisma (*inquit* Camero) *est secessio in Religionis negotio vel temeraria, vel injusta, sive facta, sive continuata*: Now that there is no secession is plain, in such persons as I am speaking of, for they continue their Communion with the Church of *England*, and do earnestly desire their service to preach the Gospel may be accepted: And as for their rashness and unrighteousness in laying down their Ministry, if it be done without either consideration or conscience, let God Almighty judge and determine, to whom they appeal; as it is, *Psal.* 17. 2. They desire their sentence may come from before him, and that his eyes would behold the things that are equal.

Not every Separation (as *Chillingworth* tells us) but a causeless separation from the external communion of any Church, is Schisme: Now they do so far deny any causeless separation, that they acknowledge no separation at all; but the suspension of their subscription to some disputable points, for which they are meekly and mixtly willing, though not (without some little regret, considering their Ordinations and Duty) to be suspended from their Office till they either see reason to subscribe, or their Superiors (to whom they humbly refer themselves think meet) to give them some relaxation.

Chillingworth (also tells us) that not separation only, but unne-

unneceſſary and unlawful conditions of Communion, make a Schiſm, and that there may be *fugati* as well as *fugitivi* from the Church. And theſe people do imagine that this in no wiſe belongs to them, becauſe they impoſe nothing at all, but deſire ſome eaſe and releaſement from the preſent Impoſitions.

Obj. But why ſhould the Churches beſt friends be bound up to ſuch hard terms, and others that are not all out ſo, be diſpenſed with?

Anſw. 1. It is not univerſally true that the Church of *England*'s beſt friends are all thoſe and only thoſe that have ſubſcribed the Declaration in the Act of Uniformity; for many think there are as good Subjects and as peaceable Miniſters out as in: however I dare ſay, ſome there are out that will not vail to many others, that are now legally ſetled in their employments and Churches in either peaceableneſs, or plain obedience.

Anſw. 2. It is not uſual for Children and Brethren of the ſame Family, and of different conſtitutions, in point of health and weakneſs, except ſuch as are unnatural and envious, to think much with Parents tenderneſs to one Child more than another; but on the contrary, Love and Fraternal Affection leads rather to ſelf-denial and condeſcentions; the ſtrong to the weak, the healthful to them that are ſickly, in order to mutual peace and preſervation.

I never heard of any but one that having ſubſcribed himſelf, being deſired if it were poſſible to get ſome fair interpretation or relaxation for his Brother that was then *in Limine*, anſwered, No: but rather, if it was in his power, he would endeavour to get his Bonds made heavier, who when time was, pretended as much moderation as others of his Brethren.

3. I think, and all men ſee it, that there have been very great priviledges indulged in theſe ten years paſt, and continued

nued to those dutiful Sons of the Church who have been so fully satisfied in their subscriptions; and discouragements answerable, upon them that have not: so that the one have been rewarded sufficiently, and the other punished severely; and there the wisdom of State hath made a very great and remarkable discrimination.

And then the Case is, whether after all these great priviledges and dignities enjoyed by some, and the discouragements that have been upon others, and the Church it self not being altogether free from danger, and from enemies on the right hand and the left, whether it may not be advisable to take in all her real friends, to strengthen her interest? and admit them again into the Ministry, and allow them for themselves and Families such outward encouragements for their service, as may be procured, or they presented to (which remain but as gleanings after the Vintage, now that the other are served and satisfied) which I shall humbly leave to the consideration of my Betters, if the exigents of our Religion and Church, *viz*, the encreasing of sin and the decay of piety do require it.

4. But if all this were not so, there is no more reason that any should complain now that posterity should come into their Ministry upon easier conditions; that then all their predecessors before these times had easier conditions than they. If a man will take occasion to think himself grieved at every thing, he will never give over creating trouble to himself and all others that are about him.

Obj. But why should the Laws be altered?

Answ. Those Laws that are moral and necessary, ought not to be altered; but those that are alterable in their own nature, or temporary and expired, or in time grown inconvenient, may be altered; *si adsit*, as *Aquinas* speaks, *evidens necessitas, aut maxima reip. utilitas.*

Laws and Ordinances (saith Sr. *W. Raleigh*) made when men are good, do oftentimes prove unprofitable, when they

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are become evil; and therefore, are ſome Laws made and abrogated according unto Accidents and Circumſtances which do happen.

Alſo new Laws which are made for a temporary trial of mens Loyalty and Obedience, when they have had their time and end; and when the utmoſt effects are produced by them which they can do, may be abrogated and relaxed, as well as made, without any reflexion upon the Lawgivers themſelves. God took down his own Ceremonial Law after a certain time for the clearer advancement of his Grace and Goſpel; and ſo may earthly Princes do theirs too, or leave them as they are in themſelves indifferent, and alſo other incognoſcible School-points to which Aſſent and Conſent is required, undetermined; when it appears to be more convenient and happy for themſelves and their people. So that no body (that I know of) deſires the Alteraton of any Law, but ſuch as is temporary and alterable: and where the alteration thereof is convenient and profitable for Church and Commonwealth.

Obj. But the *Presbyterians* know not what they would have; if the Parliament ſhould make a Law for their ſatisfaction, they would never be ſatisfied, nor can they agree amongſt themſelves what to deſire: ſome are for one thing, ſome for another; and whatſoever is granted, it is impoſſible that all the Non-conformiſts ſhould be pleaſed.

Anſw. This Objection, when I heard it at firſt, ſeemed to me ſo inconſiderable, that I verily thought it had never been objected in earneſt; but to have more of ſcorn and diſdain in it, to make the *Presbyterians* ridiculous, than of ſtrength and reaſon to keep them as they are.

Yet ſince this Objection obtains ſome belief, and moves ſome well-tempered men that are ready to do them a kindneſs, when it lies in their way.

I anſwer, That it is well known by their Principles and Papers what they would have; and they are ſo far from being ill to pleaſe, that what the Biſhops have offered themſelves

ſelves before, or upon the Kings Reſtauration, would pleaſe them, or His Gracious Declaration concerning Eccleſiaſtical affairs, in the year 1661.

Yea, and I might almoſt further add, what the Reverend Biſhops think fit to grant, if they intend a kindneſs to them whoſe Principles they themſelves underſtand or to the Church it ſelf in this great decay of Piety, and mighty overflow of Atheiſm, Hereſie and all manner of Debauchery, for want of Preachers, would be very thankfully acknowleded & accepted.

Obj. If it be ſaid what will pleaſe one party, will not content another.

Anſw. There are two principal Reaſons and Ends for making abatements in ſome things which are now impoſed: Firſt, to keep the Miniſters and Members of the Church of *England* (that differ in ſmaller matters) together united againſt the common Enemies, Errors, Hereſies, and Schiſmes that threaten either to invade or undermine the Church it ſelf; and this may be done by a Comprehenſion.

Secondly, To prevent Sedition, and keep us in peace; and this may be ſecured by ſuch a Toleration as the wiſdom of the Parliament ſhall think fit; they being beſt able to give ſuch Antidotes as may preſerve the Churches Vitals, and to cure and cheriſh ſuch Members as are weak or corrupted, without amputation.

Comprehenſion is for ſtrengthening the Churches Intereſt; and Toleration (if our Rulers think fit to grant it) of ſuch things as are tolerable; this is for the Kingdomes peace.

Now the things which the *Presbyterians* deſire to be comprehended in, are not many nor great, nor in the leaſt entrenching upon the Eſſentials of the Church, her Doctrine or Diſcipline.

But ſome Circumſtantials which our Church before they be commanded, acknowledge indifferent; and ſome other Impoſitions temporary, which in a few years according to the Act for Uniformity, do expire: theſe things we humbly deſire Diſpenſation for, are ſuch as are diſpenſed with in other Churches; and may be (I truſt in our own) without any hazard to her Doctrine, Diſcipline or Glory.

And as for the Toleration before mentioned, thoſe that are called *Presbyterians*, humbly account that it is no more a part of the Comprehenſion which they deſire for themſelves, and would be content with, than Separation and Faction, which this ſhould cure, is part of their principles or practices; or the perſons that hope for it, are *Presbyterians*; or the Doctrines they hold, the Doctrines of the Church of *England*; and therefore ſhould be no more put together with them by right, than the Church of *England*; with whom the Papiſts do as indiſtinctly joyn them, as our Epiſcopal Brethren do with the *Presbyterians*, from whom they have been pleas'd to make a ſeceſſion as well as from themſelves.

Yet notwithſtanding, ſome even of them that are accounted of the Separation, acknowledge the Being, Ordinances and Officers of the Church of *England*; and are very grave, pious and learned men, who have done, and may yet further do Her and Religion great Service by their Pens and Parts; whoſe Caſes and Liberties the wiſdom of the Parliament (no doubt) but will take care of (when theſe things come into conſideration) according to the quality of their perſons, and the modeſty of their Principles as well as others.

In the mean time, If I were to Petition, I ſhould humbly beg it upon my knees, that it would pleaſe our Gracious Soveraign, together with His Two Houſes in Parliament, in whoſe hands the relaxation and making of Laws are; that according to the Loyalty and Integrity of their Hearts, Prin-

ciples and Actions, and no otherwiſe; that they would grant thoſe who are reputed *Presbyterians*, a liberty to preach the Goſpel, with ſuch Encouragements in their Miniſtry, by an Act for Comprehenſion, or otherwiſe, as they in their grave Wiſdom ſhall think moſt convenient; that ſo all heats and animoſities, on all ſides, may be quieted and quenched; and they that have been dead, in Law, for theſe ten years paſt, may be revived; which may poſſibly alſo give decayed Piety, Peace and Charity, an happy reſurrection. Which God of his great Mercy grant for Jeſus Chriſt ſake, *Amen.*

FINIS.